

THE BRITISH WORKWOMAN OUT AND AT HOME.

"A Woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.—Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her."—Prov. xxxi.



MRS. MIDDLETON'S "VERY VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS DAY."

fection the "cup that cheers but not inebriates." There is cake for the children with muffins and crumpets for the elders, and then, tea over, comes Mrs. Middleton's gift—the Christmas tree. To deck this had been for weeks the happy task of Ruth and her young brothers, and a gay sight it was as it stood on the table, lighted up, with a doll for little Kate, a drum and a horse for the little boys, presents in short for every individual, besides various curious devices in sweetmeats hanging about its branches, such as a pig and onions in sugar, and tiny shoulders of mutton, and cherries. This was diversion till supper time, after which cordial good-nights were exchanged, and thus ended Mrs. Middleton's "very, very happy Christmas day."

And now, dear reader, having shown you this excellent working family in the enjoyment of peace and plenty, such as order and good management, assisted by prudence and temperance, will always produce in every household, we must defer till our next chapter telling you the history and trials of Mrs. Middleton, who, in her married life, had seen many vicissitudes, but who, by her wise self-government and excellent common sense, aided by a strong and deep sense of religion and devout trust in her Heavenly Guide and Father, had steered clear of the rocks which to those less firm and true would at one time have threatened shipwreck. Now, aided by her dutiful children, she enjoyed the rest and tranquillity of beautiful and useful old age, from which she looked forward in the fulness of time, to reap a still higher and richer reward, in the enjoyment of that "rest" which remaineth to the people of God, in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

NAUGHTY CHILDREN, AND WHAT TO DO WITH THEM.—No. 2.

The chief reason why mothers have so much trouble with their children is because they do not begin their work of training them soon enough. They wait until the evil passions get strong before they begin to curb them. This is a fatal mistake, for if you once let your child see that he has conquered you, he will ever afterwards be struggling for the mastery. Be careful that what you tell him to do is strictly right and proper, and then be firm. What you have said must be done.

It is so important to ensure obedience that, however busy you may be, all other things should be made to give way to it. If from the very first you would determine never once to yield a point, not to allow your children ever to question your commands, you would save yourself from much after misery. Before your little ones can walk they may learn either to be obedient or disobedient. I have seen a mother refuse at first to give her child the lump of sugar he was crying for, and then, because he kept on teasing, let him have it "just to quiet him." Now, there could not be a surer way to make that child disobedient. If she had just endured his crying a little longer, he would have soon wearied himself into quietness, because he would find out that it was no use that he should cry, and that she meant no.

A little consideration or forethought will often do much towards preventing disobedience. For instance, you perhaps call off little Susan to go on an errand for you just at the very moment when she is all heart and soul in the enjoyment of a game of play with her brother. It is very hard for her to obey just then, and so she resists. "Weary of the contention, perhaps, at last you give in, and let her finish her game." Now, if you had told her ten minutes before when she was doing nothing there would have been no hesitation, and a step would have been taken towards forming the habit of obedience, instead of that of disobedience. I do not mean that matters should always be made so smooth to children, as that they should have no temptations to resist; but it is well to see that the temptation is not greater than they are able to bear.

Perhaps the two most troublesome children in the village of Hopton are Tom and Lucy Parr, although few people could look in their merry smiling faces without loving them.

There they are running by the cottage window, and calling out "We're going to play, we shan't stop here while the other children are after them. You'll catch it; I'll give it you, as sure as you are alive." The fact was she had told them a quarter of an hour before to be sure and stay in the kitchen while she

went on with her washing in the brew-house. They had nothing to do, no sort of amusement, and their play-loving natures could hardly resist going into the sunny meadow close by to gather the daisies and buttercups.

No great harm in that either, only that their mother had told them to stay in doors. She is much too busy to go after them, and by the time they return one of the neighbours has dropped in. Of course, Mrs. Parr does not want to expose her children's bad conduct; her own angry feeling moreover has passed away, so no notice is taken. Then father comes in, and he "won't have a noise," so off they go to bed with the lesson firmly fixed in their minds that it is of very little consequence whether they obey or not. Mother will be sure not to punish them. And all this mischief might so easily have been prevented, if Mrs. Parr had just given the children leave to play in the field, or else provided them with some employment or amusement before she forbade them to go into the house.

We all know the old saying "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." Children must have some amusement. If you refuse to let them have it, they will be sure to seek out sinful pleasure for themselves. It is well, if you can manage it, to let them have a certain time in each day that they may call their own, and a certain place where they may keep their little toys and precious relics of glass or china which are so dear to a child's heart. We, who are older, are very apt to forget what small matters make up the happiness and misery of children, and so do not enter into their feelings as we might do. If instead of calling their play "mess and bother," and telling them to get out of our way, we were to take a little interest in their amusements, we should not only increase their happiness, but should ourselves gain a much firmer hold on their affections, and they would thus by degrees learn to trust in our love, even when we are refusing them the mirthful enjoyments which they covet.

A little patience and a few kind words do not cost much, but the want of them may often make the heart of those sad whom God hath not made sad.

THE REV. NEWMAN HALL, LL.B.

One of the foremost men amongst the nonconformist divines of the present day, and certainly one of the most popular, is he whose portrait we now give. As he is one who, from energetic spirit and sheer force of hard work, has come to be mixed up, more or less, with almost every religious movement of the time in connection with the body to which he belongs, the public, generally, are better acquainted with him than with most ministers. At the same time it may not be out of place to give a few particulars respecting his career.

Newman Hall was born at Maidstone, May 2nd, 1816. His father, the late Mr. John Vine Hall, a flourishing bookseller and newspaper proprietor of that town, had, about two months prior to this event, been led to see that a life spent in the service of the world could only end unhappily, and thus it came about that the lad had the advantage of early religious training. At the proper age he was sent to the school of Messrs. Wood and Thorogood, in Totterdean, Her. At the age of sixteen, his nature was so wrought that wonderful change, briefly expressed by the word "conversion," and from that time he began to work for the good of those around as well as for himself. The spare time which he had after assisting his father in the business, was to a large extent taken up in various religious occupations, Sunday school teaching, tract distribution, open air addresses, &c. &c. Finding that he craved the possession of talent, his friends urged him to devote himself entirely to the ministry, and his own inclinations tending this way, he entered Highbury College in 1837, at the age of twenty-one, his recommendation being endorsed by the Independent church at Maidstone, presided over by the Rev. E. Jenkins, of which he was a member, and of which his father had by this time become one of the deacons. He worked hard at college, diversifying his labours as usual with students amongst dissenters, by preaching as occasion required, and in 1841 passed his examination for the degree of B.A. at the London University. Wherever he preached he was liked: and in the year 1842 he accepted a call to the pulpit of Albion Chapel, Hull, and in the course of a few years became one of the most popular ministers in the locality, crowds thronging to hear him whenever he preached. And yet, with all his earnestness and success, he could not have

had any great amount of self-confidence, and he once got severely taken to task at the Surrey Chapel for not speaking when called upon suddenly. We believe he still adheres to the plan of avoiding as much as possible impromptu speech.

In 1846, Mr. Hall married Miss Charlotte Gordon, the daughter of an excellent, learned, and pious physician of Hull. The life of this gentleman was subsequently written by his son-in-law, and published under the title of "The Christian Philosopher Triumphant over Death." In 1854, the Rev. James Sherman resigned his position as pastor of Surrey Chapel, and partly on account of Mr. Sherman's advice, and partly from the want of acquiescence and the great ability displayed by Mr. Hall, that gentleman was invited to take the vacant post. At the same time, two other important London pulpits were unsupplied, one being that of Craven Chapel, and the other, if we remember rightly, Finsbury Chapel. Each of the three congregations was anxious to secure the services of the Hull preacher, and it was only after consideration and consultation with his ministerial brethren, that Mr. Hall decided to accept the invitation to Surrey Chapel. As there are many people who are unable to comprehend any motive-power but that of poms, shillings, and pence, we may say that, to the best of our belief, Mr. Hall did not benefit by the change in a pecuniary sense. Once fairly settled in London, he was not content to plod on in the beaten track, although, even there, there was much to be done. All the other work ordinarily have undertaken be accomplished, and then looked out for fresh work. One of his first extra efforts was in the way of open air preaching. At first, he invited his congregation to accompany him to the Oldick, in Blackfriars Road, after service on the Thursday evening, where he would mount on a chair and discourse plainly and earnestly, and in a manner which riveted the hearer's attention. The crowd grew so large that he was obliged to ask his own people to stop away. After a time the obstruction to the roadway became so great that the police interfered, and since then, the out-door ministrations have been confined to the space in front of Surrey Chapel. In connection with this, we may mention an anecdote which is strikingly illustrative of the character of the man. It is told, that when one day he was preaching in a country town, the minister of the place bewailed the absence of the working population of the place. Mr. Hall suggested that if they would not come to the sermon, the sermon might be taken to them. Some one said they had thought about having an association for the purpose. "Associations are very good things," said Mr. Hall, "and after service we will form one." At the conclusion of the service, Mr. Hall announced an open-air meeting, and getting permission of a tradesman to occupy the ground in front of his house, borrowed a chair, mounted, and began, and so showed the good folks that the best way to form an association was to get the people to associate together to hear; "and surely," said he, "some brother will be found to speak to them of the unsearchable riches of Christ." Space will not allow us to do more than allude to Mr. Hall's labours in connection with the Temperance cause, which are happily too well known to need much comment. Many other spheres of usefulness in which he engages must also be passed by. We must, however, mention the "Popular Lectures" which he has delivered at the Surrey Chapel, when these were commenced in 1860, some opposition was experienced. Many good old people thought that, to use the chapel for such purposes, was little short of desecration, but Mr. Hall replied that the chapel filled with working men, seeking and gaining instruction, was surely better than being shut up in darkness. Ultimately a strong will and good sense, backed by the satisfactory results of the experiment, carried the day. For all these efforts, Mr. Hall has great natural abilities, and he sometimes gives proof that even as a singer, or an elocutionist, he possesses gifts of no mean order. He has written many works, some of which have attained an immense circulation. He takes great interest in the special Sunday afternoon and evening services at the theatres and elsewhere. As may be supposed, he is in the habit of acquisition as a speaker; and it was in order to counteract the evils arising from this breaking in upon his mental training, that he devoted himself for a time to the study of the law. In 1866, he took his degree as LL.B. with great éclat. Mr. Hall has recently been chosen as the chairman of the Congregational Union.

We are indebted to the kind and excellent editor of "The Illustrated Christian Times" for the portrait which embellishes this number of our work; and we take this opportunity to commend to the reader's notice that useful and well sustained publication.

The British Workwoman, OUT AND AT HOME.

DECEMBER, 1865.

"I BELIEVE THAT ANY IMPROVEMENT WHICH COULD BE BROUGHT TO BEAR ON THE MOTHERS, WOULD EFFECT A GREATER AMOUNT OF GOOD THAN ANYTHING THAT HAS YET BEEN DONE."—*Earl Shaftesbury.*

A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

A MERRY Christmas to you all, dear readers of the "BRITISH WORKWOMAN." We hope to be the first, as we shall surely not be the least hearty in our greeting. Old December seems to have come upon us with very stealthy footsteps; but here he is, and we know that he will bring us the good old favourite time, the time of joy and love, and mirth and music, and dear faces and kindly greetings—even Christmas, who is always a many-welcomed guest! Old Christmas, with its holly-wreath and song, its good gifts for all, its bursts of childish laughter, and gladder music of the joy of aged hearts. Dear old Christmas, of whom we talk from year to year, and who comes to us now as cheerily as when we ourselves were children, and delighted in nothing so much as a Christmas-tree!

May he bring his pleasant greeting, his merriest song to you. May he have no tear-drops on his laughing cheeks,—no hitherness in the cup he holds out to you; not a single sorrow—for one day at least, nothing but joy and love, and goodwill.

A merry Christmas to you, our very lowliest friends. If the year has been pretty full of hard work and little else, if the days have been too much alike, and the nights too short and too drear, may you have a day of real brightness at the last.

A merry Christmas to you, young friends, who all the year throng our factories, and who know what it is to work hard. May it be spent with your nearest and dearest by your side, with no lover's quarrels, no shade of regret, but a downright happy day be given to you all.

A merry Christmas to you, Mothers! May your little ones be dearer to your fond hearts than ever, and the sound of their contented glee fill you with gratitude and bring real heart-music to your souls; and, if there be a vacant seat by your fireside, only noticed by the Mother's heart, let there be no grief to-day, but only a calm resignation to the Father who has put the lamb to sleep in His own bosom.

A merry Christmas to you British Women who work for others and not yourselves. May you be glad by looking back upon a successful year, glad with the gladness that knows "it is better to give than to receive;" glad for the joy of others, for the laughter of desolate hearts that you have kindled into brightness; glad for the sighing and weeping that you have turned into singing.

A merry Christmas to you all, little children in your buoyant glee, maidens with the love-light in your eyes, mothers with your hearts full of tenderness, aged ones with the love of children and grandchildren—making the world bright and warm to you even in the winter.

But make it merry and glad for others as well as yourselves. Take some poor, homeless, foodless child, and love and make it happy this Christmas time, for the sake of Him who blessed little children, and was himself the "Babe of

Bethlehem." Take not the large loaf of mercy which the Father sends, and begrudge a crust to a brother who has need. The day on which salvation was given to us should surely be celebrated by some good gifts from us to others. Let us have a generous as well as a merry Christmas.

Do we find any wrath in our hearts on this December day? It is not yet too late to turn out the grim guest and make room for a pleasant one. If there lives any one who has wronged us and is unforgiven, now is the time. Surely we shall not let Christmas come and find us hating a brother. Now is the time to forgive. Now we can hold out our hand, and let in a flood of love to our heart, and make him glad for Christmas day.

If there is any one we have wronged, we surely are not going to let Christmas come and find us too proud to say "Forgive me." Surely now, we shall own our fault, and promise to be more careful in future. We, whom the All Merciful has so

sure our readers will speak a kind word to those who know us not, and help to distribute the words that are hearty and sincere as any they will hear, and that wish them all, young and old, rich and poor,

A MERRY AND A HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

IN THE RAIN.

"Drip, drip—how pretty it is!" said a little girl inside the window-pane.

"Drip, drip—how bitter it is!" said a little girl outside.

They might have been two chirping sparrows, answering each other unconsciously, only that one looked too merry, the other too sad.

Poor little Miriam! she trotted on, picking up her tiny, bare feet, as daintily as a lady in satin slippers, for chilblains do not like mud, soft though it be; it seemed to Miriam that her chilblains did not like anything—certainly not being out in the pinching cold, but wear a fire and getting warm was worse; it seemed to involve every variety of aching and smarting; they did not like walking barefoot, with the chance of a sharp stone to make them dance; but, last winter, they had been very uncomfortable in boots. Miriam had heard that chilblains could be cured by taking a tea-spoonful of brimstone and treacle three times a week; but she did not know of any brimstone, except a lump belonging to the landlady's dog; and as to treacle, if any did ever come into their house, it was spread out very thinly over a piece of bread, and called dinner.

Everybody in that house was poor, but poorest of all were Miriam and her mother. Yet the reason for this did not appear. Mrs. Ray, Miriam's mother, was healthy, strong and skilful, industrious and sober; she could generally earn nearly a pound a week by working for shops; but she had an enemy—an enemy that was always getting her out of employment, and never by any chance helped her to any; that had certainly, in part, killed her husband, and injured the health of her child, and yet an enemy that for many unaccountable mistakes she treated as a friend—fostered, and petted, and encouraged to stay by her, else she would have been free long ago. This powerful, long-lived foe, was what she called "her temper."

"Yes, Mrs. Vowles," she was saying just then to her landlady, "I've got my temper, and when it's once up, it must have its way."

As the said temper was known to be "once up" at least six times a week, Mrs. Vowles said nothing, and the other continued—

"As to being a carrying toad, I never would; take me, or leave me, that's what I always say."

"And they leave you, of course," said Mrs. Vowles.

"Well, that's not my business."

"I should have thought it was."

"Now, Mrs. Vowles, do you mean to be insulting? or don't you? speak it plain, that's all I ask of you."

"I wonder how you would look if I was to take you at your word," said Mrs. Vowles, smiling a little.

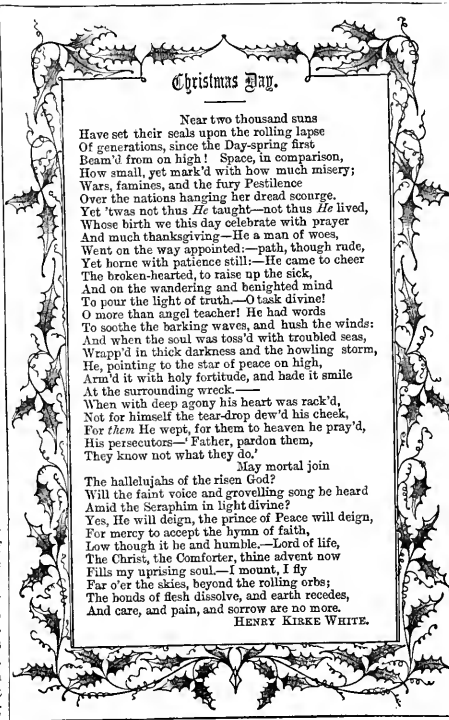
"I'm not in the habit of eating my words, ma'am, whatever you may be; what I says is, 'speak it plain, and I means 'speak it plain.'"

Every word in this sentence had been increasing in speed and sound, till it ended with something like a scream.

"Well," said Mrs. Vowles, "if you are inclined to hear the truth, for once, it is that you are a foolish, wicked woman—that you are ruining yourself, and starving your child, by indulging an evil temper, which God gave you strength to subdue years ago."

This was plain enough in all conscience, and, for once, Mrs. Ray walked away silent to her own room.

"I hope I have not done harm," thought Mrs. Vowles. But she had done good; something curiously like her words had been knocking at the door of her neighbour's heart for some time, only to be put aside



greatly forgiven, must not be too proud to own to a brother that we have injured him also.

Let us make Christmas a good time in these ways, and it is sure to be filled with mirth and music and song, and perfect gladness of heart.

What a happy meeting time it is! How our dear ones will come from afar and sit around our firesides, and fill our homes with gladness! And when our hearts are so full of joy, let us not forget to feel thankful for that wonderful love that came from Heaven and lived among us, and took from our life its curse, giving us instead the inestimable blessing of life everlasting!

We shall be very glad to know that our journal has a welcome place with the other friends who gather around the Christmas fireside. We are

as fancies; now, spoken by visible lips, the truth came stronger.

By this time little Miriam had come in.

"Well," said her mother.

"The forewoman says you're not to have any more work till you can be civil; and I am so hungry," Miriam seemed to expect a blow, for she covered down out of reach; her mother, however, went on arranging some paper patterns, and presently uttered an exclamation.

"What," said Miriam, faintly.

"Why, here is the very pattern me and the forewoman had words about; she said I had got it, and I said I hadn't; well, I shall have to eat humble pie, now."

Miriam said nothing; very quietly, very gently, she had laid her weary head on one little thin arm, and—fainted.

"Starving your child," ejaculated Mrs. Ray, as she took up the little one and fairly hugged her into consciousness again; tears in her mother's eyes seemed to astonish Miriam into some attempt at consolation.

"Are you hungry, mother?" she said; "I'm not—not now, only so sleepy."

Even as she spoke, the child's eyes closed, and she sank into the deep, heavy sleep of cold and exhaustion.

"God help me! if I have not forgotten Him too long," sighed Mrs. Ray, as she laid her little daughter on the bed, and went down to her landlady's parlour.

"Mrs. Vowles," she said, "you're a good woman; will you forgive and forget, and just give an eye to my little girl while I go about some work?"

Mrs. Vowles was a good woman: her notions of "giving an eye" were broad and comprehensive; accordingly, when Miriam awoke, she found herself wrapped in a warm shawl, with a cup of hot broth sending up a savoury steam, through which the landlady's face looked dim and radiant, like an angel. Meanwhile, Mrs. Ray was, with some difficulty, explaining to the forewoman, her employer, that she had found the pattern, and meant to be have better in future.

Now it happened, unfortunately, that the forewoman also had a temper, and so, instead of helping this, her erring sister, who was struggling out of her error, she did her best to push her back again, by saying—

"Well, as to being anything but an impertinent vixen, that you never will; but your work suits us, so I don't mind giving you another trial."

It was hard to keep down the sharp answer which came so readily; but Mrs. Ray did it, saying to herself, "Raining myself—that's pretty well done. I couldn't do much more that way—but killing my child—that's another thing; I won't do that, God helping me."

It seemed strange, that Mrs. Vowles's rough speech should have such a different effect from the forewoman's; but the one had spoken in anger, the other in calm conviction; the one spoke to please herself, the other really wanted to benefit her neighbour; it did not lessen her influence to find her quietly nursing little Miriam; but Mrs. Ray started when she saw the doctor there too.

"You must not mind," whispered Mrs. Vowles, "the little one seemed so poorly, I thought it

better to send for some one." She was going on, but a glance at her neighbour's face showed her that further apologies were needless; the Mrs. Ray who needed to be soothed and managed like some wild animal was gone,—seemed to have been left behind in the street, and in her stead, had come a loving, anxious mother, in answer to whose inquiring look, the doctor said honestly, "I don't know, it seems to be a kind of atrophy; give her a little light nourishment every few hours. I will come again this evening."

Mrs. Ray and the landlady took turns in watching and feeding little Miriam, and grew so friendly over their labour of love, that Mrs. Vowles said to her husband that night, "Really, Mrs. Ray is not such a virago after all; she has been quite gentle all day."

The gentleness lasted till it grew into a habit; partly, perhaps, because through the first weeks of Miriam's illness it was necessary to keep her very quiet; and it is not easy to be what Mrs. Ray called

Mrs. Vowles bent her head, and Miriam said, "Mother is never cross now."

"Mother" had heard; she came swiftly and gently, and taking the child in her arms, she said, "Mother never will be cross now."

"Oh, how nice!" and Miriam nestled into the strong, loving arms, as though now at length she had a real mother.

Miriam grew quite well, and had shoes and dinner always; but the best thing of all was, that Mrs. Ray kept her word.

SADIE.

BETHLEHEM.

"BETHLEHEM," says the late Madame Pfeiffer, who visited it in 1842, "lies on a hill, surrounded by several others; with the exception of the convent, it contains not a single handsome building. The inhabitants, half of whom

are Catholics, muster about two thousand five hundred strong. Many live in grottoes and semi-subterranean dwellings, cutting out garlands and other devices in mother-of-pearl, &c. The number of houses does not exceed a hundred at the most, and the poverty here seems excessive, for nowhere have I been so much pestered with beggar-children as in this town. Hardly has the stranger reached the convent gates before these urchins are seen rapidly approaching from all quarters. One rushes forward to hold the horse, while a second grasps the stirrup; a third and a fourth present their arm to help you to dismount; and, in the end, the whole swarm unanimously stretch forth their hands for 'backsheesh.'"

"The little convent and church are both situated near the town, and are built on the spot where the Saviour was born. The whole is surrounded by a strong fortress-wall, a very low, narrow gate forming the entrance. In front of this fortress stands a handsome, well-paved area. So soon as we have passed the little gate, we find ourselves in the courtyard, or rather in the nave of the church, which is unfortunately more than half destroyed, but which must once have been eminent both for its size and beauty. Some traces of mosaic can still be detected on the walls. Two rows of high handsome pillars, forty-eight in number, intersect the interior; and the beam-work, said to be of cedar-wood from Lebanon, looks almost new. Beneath the high altar of this great church is the grotto in which Christ was born. Two staircases lead downward to it. One of the staircases belongs to the Armenians, the other to the Greeks. The Catholics have none at all. Both the walls and the floor are covered with marble slabs. A marble tablet, with the inscription—

'HIC DE VIRGINE MARIA JESUS CHRISTUS
NATUS EST,'

marks the spot whence the true light shone abroad over the world.

"The spot where our Saviour was shown to the worshipping Magi is but a few paces distant. An altar is erected opposite, on the place where the manger stood in which the shepherds found our Lord."



REV. NEWMAN HALL, LL.B. [See page 203.]

outspoken, when one may not speak out; yet more, because every night and morning, by Miriam's bed, her mother knelt and prayed.

By and by, the doctor began to look bright and merry, and to congratulate his two nurses on their little patient. One morning, he said, "Now I shall not come any more, unless you send for me." When he was gone, Mrs. Vowles went to Miriam, and found her crying.

"Why, love!" she said, "what is the matter?"

"I don't want to be well," piped Miriam.

"Why not? you surely don't want to die, you little thing?"

"No, I don't want to die, I should like to be ill always."

"Whatever for?"

"Stoop down, and I'll whisper in your ear."

A CHRISTMAS EVE.

CHRISTMAS EVE! But it was the saddest Christmas Eve that John Morston and his wife had ever known. They were sitting together by the sick, the dying bed of their only child—little Maggie. She would be two years old if she lived till the Christmas morning dawned—just two.

It was about half-past four o'clock in the afternoon, and even now the darkness was closing about the outskirts of the town. In the close, populous heart of the town it had been dark an hour ago, and the lamps had been lit in the streets and in many of the shops, and now cast their yellow glare upon the snow that so many thousands of feet were treading; but neither John nor his wife had been out to make any Christmas purchases. The morrow was to be no day of good cheer to them.

Their cottage stood in the suburbs, one of a row of many others inhabited by small tradesmen and mechanics; a row of little gardens ran along the front—dusty town gardens, with stunted snow-blackened shrubs, and feebly blooming flowers. Town children and town flowers always seem to have a sort of sympathy between them.

This evening the little prim garden walk led to the door was filled with snow, and the whole garden was one solid white blot.

There was a little room beyond the tiny parlour, and in the room in a corner by the fire a little cot, and here lay little Maggie. Very pale were the faces of father and mother as they bent over the dying child. The curtains of the cot, the sheet that covered it, were like-ly for whiteness, the only touch of colour in the sad picture, lay on the fever-burned cheek of little Maggie.

"To-night—of all nights in the year, John?" said the mother.

"It is hard," he said, quietly.

"Hard? No, John, cruel. It is cruel to take her from us at all, much more on such a night—our only child!"

"No, my wife—no, Lizzie—it is not cruel. God who gave her has the best right to her, but it is a dreadfully hard trial to us."

"I wish He had never given her."

John covered his face, and now they both listened silently to the heavy breathing of the child.

There was a low knock at the house door. John started but did not move. Again it came, and when it another sound, which roused him and sent him to the door—the bitter cry of a child.

A little boy, seemingly five or six years old, sat on the snow-covered door step, crying. He was without cap or shoes, and his clothes were of the scantiest kind, thin and ragged, and scarcely reaching to the knee.

John looked at the little blue, pinched face and shivering frame with pity.

"What is the matter, my man?" he said, kindly.

"I have nothing to eat, sir, and it's so cold," said a little trembling voice.

"I'll get you some bread and meat, child, and you shall eat some and carry the rest home."

"Not home, sir. I don't want to go home any more."

"Not go home?"

"No, not any more. There isn't anybody there to go to."

"Where's your mother?"

"Dead, sir," and a great tear dropped from the child's large eyes, and fell on the little blue fingers that clasped and unclasped each other as he spoke.

"But your father, where is he?"

"Dead, sir. He died yesterday—that is why I have no one to go to. Everybody is dead. I had a sister and two brothers, but they are all dead. Everybody is dead and covered up in the churchyard, and I wish I was there, too, with mother—I do indeed."

"Come in, my child, and warm yourself at the fire, and I'll give you supper and a bed, and we'll see what's to be done."

John's heart was soft with his own sorrow, it had not made him selfish.

"Here, little one, this way."

"It is dark, sir."

"Here's my hand, then. Now sit down a bit by the fire, and I'll be back to you."

The child did as he was bid, and crouched on the hearth, with eyes fixed wistfully on John, and his little palms spread out for heat. John went back to the child's seat. In these few short minutes a change had taken place; death had set his seal on the little damp brow—the breath came unevenly. Neither husband nor wife spoke. Reader, do you

know what this silence is? Have you ever seen the last moments of one very dear to you, and felt your very grief silenced and held in check by the awful presence of death? You did not dare to speak, to sob; you only waited—waited the end—wished for it—and surely those awful moments of silent waiting are full of the bitterest pain that our nature can know—is it not so? And so John and his wife sat very silent—she with little Maggie in her arms, for when the long hour had passed she laid the little form down quietly, and they both stood up—child-lessly.

After awhile John remembered the little boy.

"Take him something to eat, John," his wife said. "I could not bear to see him." And John did.

It was good to see how the hungry child ate; but John could not watch him for thinking of his own dead child.

"More, my boy? Here's more for you."

"No more, sir," and the child pushed the plate aside.

"Why do you cry again? You're not cold and hungry now?"

"No, sir, it was the supper—it makes me cry."

"The supper?"

"Yes, my mother had never any supper hardly. She used to give it to us, and sometimes she had none to give us. That is what made her die, the doctor said."

"Did not your father work?"

"Sometimes; but he used not to bring the money home always. There was a beautiful place he used to go to, with large bright barrels all round, and a great many gas-lights, and he drank there. That is why he died, the doctor said, yesterday."

"Who will take care of you?"

"Nobody."

"Did nobody say what was to be done with you?"

"They said the workhouse, sir, and when I heard that, I slipped out the door yesterday, and I got nothing to eat all day, and I slept out, but it was a very cold night. I was wishing I was in the churchyard with mother. I won't ever go to the workhouse."

John made up a little bed for the boy by the kitchen fire, and so left him for the night.

Ah, the lonely Christmas morning! The sun shone so brightly over the snow—the bells rang and rang from every steeple through the clear air. The sunshine and the bells seemed cruel.

"It is cruel, John! it is, to take one—only one. What have we done to deserve it? Why did the Almighty give her only to take her away? And this is her birthday."

"Lizzie remember these words; they have been in my thoughts all night, for I could not sleep—What I do not know now, but then you shall know hereafter."

"I wish I was dead! I would rather have died than have lost her."

"The boy, Lizzie. We must think of the boy. What's to be done with him?" said John, trying to turn her thoughts.

"Oh, I don't know. Send him away. What have we to do with him? I have enough to trouble me without taking thought for him. Give him a loaf, and send him away, John."

"But he has no home, he says. There's the workhouse, of course, but somehow I cannot find it in my heart to send him there. I'll go out to-day, and ask a question or two about him."

John did make the inquiries, and found that the child had spoken truth, and he wished that his wife would take to the child.

"I could find it in my heart to keep the boy, and make a son of him," he said.

"I could not bear it, John. The Almighty has taken my child, and I do not wish to have a stranger in her place. If He had spared her to us, then I might have felt it in my heart to do for this little orphan out of thankfulness; but now, what have I to be thankful for?" And she covered her face with her hands, and turned aside.

"Lizzie, I cannot think 'twas all for nothing this child came crying to the door just as our Maggie was going from us. I feel as if 'twas sent for a comfort."

"A comfort! No, no; nothing can comfort me for my child!"

But the days went on, and little Tom Brown stayed at the cottage still. And John was very kind to him, but Lizzie never spoke to the child, nor looked at him if she could help it. John watched her sadly, and said at last—

"Must the boy go, Lizzie?"

"I don't suppose he need. He's doing no harm that I know of."

"But the expense? His food comes to something."

"Not the bit that he eats," said his wife.

"But the trouble?"

"I don't mind the trouble; it cheers me up a little to have something to do while you are at work. I'm mending his bits of clothes, and I'll make up a thing or two new for him to wear; he wants something warm these bitter cold days."

John almost smiled, for the first time since his child was taken sick. His wife was beginning to take a little comfort, he saw.

Very tender and thoughtful John was with the little creature of his bounty. "Come in by the fire, boy; close up here, as if you had a right to it, the little parlour in the evenings. 'Hold up your head, little Tom, and don't be afraid of anybody.'"

But it was very long before little Tom Brown could hold his fair curly head up; it had been bowed down all his young life before, with such a heavy weight of care and sorrow.

"He'll be coming round," John would say; "he'll talk and smile with the best before long. He's much like a little flower, Lizzie, that has been half nipped with the frost, and couldn't blossom out for want of sun—but he's getting a little sun now."

It was strange what a pleasure John took in the boy; perhaps one reason lay in a fancied resemblance.

"He has eyes like our Maggie!" And so, for the sake of the little blue eyes now shut in death, little Tom's became dear to him.

Of course John was the most foolish of men in the eyes of his neighbours. Very few could find an excuse for him.

"A little charity child! that wasn't his business in the least."

"What's the workhouse for?"

"He'll ruin the child, making so much of it; 'twould be much better if he let it go into the house, and learn to get its own bread, as it will have to do, some day."

"Of course the boy shall get his bread," said John, when he heard this. "I'll teach him my trade. He'll make a very good carpenter, I'll be bound; and he must be a scholar first. I'll send Tom to school at once."

John's sister was harder on him than any of the strangers.

"You'll repent what you're doing, John. Mark my words for it—that boy has no claim on you, and you're wronging those that have."

"Who am I wronging, Mary?"

"Why, your wife, of course."

"I don't see that—nor she either."

"Of course she doesn't see it, poor thing; she is grieving too much to see anything; but you should see it for her. There you are, keeping and feeding and clothing a boy, and paying for schooling for him, and you're none so rich that you can afford it. What have you but your day's wages? Now, if you were to be taken sick, or die, what would become of your wife, I should like to know?"

"Well, I do save a little against a rainy day."

"Saving a little isn't enough; you should save every penny you could. You're not like my good man, who'll have a pension to leave me."

"No, Mary, I'll not turn the boy out while I've a crust to share with him. I am thankful to God for all his mercies to me. He has given me health and strength to work, a good wife, and a comfortable home, and a better gift than any of these in giving me a heart to love and thank Him for His kindness. He sent the boy, I'm sure, to be a comfort to us both, and put it into my heart to take him in instead of slandering the door in his face, as I might have done, and I mean to stick by the boy."

"Well, you'll see the folly of it—taking up with a little wretch that came from nobody knows where. You'll get no thanks for it in the end. He'll run away and better himself when he gets a chance—rob the house, maybe, and run off and join the rest of the little pickpockets about the streets; and when he does, don't expect me to be sorry for you, for you'll only get what you deserve, and I won't say that I'll be sorry, either."

"It's not in the child to turn out so."

"We'll see. They who live longest see most. I've warned you."

"You have, indeed; and now, Mary, content your mind, and step in and have a cup of tea with us; it's just ready."

"No, not I. I haven't time. I must be going home; and besides, it's of no use staying and talking

to you, for the more I talk, the more you won't listen."

"Good evening to you, then," said John, pleasantly. It was never his way to get cross with anybody.

* * * * *

We must pass over many years now, and take up the thread of our little tale again. Little Tom Brown is now a fine young man of five-and-twenty, out of his time, and duly accomplished as a carpenter. His wages have come in very pleasantly for some time to add to the comforts which Lizzie delights in placing on the homely comfortable board she spreads for her husband and his adopted son. Lizzie's own comforts are increasing of late; no lady in the land has a prettier work-box, nor a neater table to set it on, nor an easier chair to sit in by the cheerful fire-side in the busy winter evenings. Tom brought the work-box after weeks of saving. Tom made the table; Tom brought the chair at a sale, and came home with it one evening on his broad shoulders. Lizzie scolded him about the chair at first. "There were chairs enough in the house, without this, I'm sure," she said.

"None like this, mother; sit in it, and try."
 "And you want a Sunday coat, Tom, and a pair of boots; but you'll never take that thought."
 "The coat will come in time, and the boots too."
 "That's what you always say; but you'll never take that thought."

"I hope I'll take thought for you, mother, as long as we live."

"Well, I don't say but that you're as good as a son to me, and the chair is the pride of the room, certainly; but you're wanting the coat, Tom."

"I'll have one to go to church in on Christmas day; that will be time enough. The best day in the year to begin with a new coat on, isn't it? I will bring it home on Christmas-day, and wear it on my birthday. I call Christmas-day my birthday; for, indeed, it began a new life to me. I never knew what the real day was. I never heard a word about it; so I am free to choose my own."

"But, my dear boy, it wants three months to Christmas yet; you'll be perished without the coat." But Tom laughed, and took Lizzie by the hands, and made her sit in the chair, and said, "I declare it makes one feel inclined to go to sleep in it; it's so soft and easy," she said.

But a dark shadow was to fall on the little house long before Christmas. John fell from a ladder from the second story of a house-front where he was at work, and was taken up, and carried home as one dead; this was in the middle of October. He revived a little under the care of his wife, and the skill of a very clever doctor; but he could not leave his bed—could not even sit up. His state soon became known among his old employers, and several of them sent handsome presents to his wife in the shape of money, and little strengthening articles of luxury for his comfort, which would have been beyond his means; but as weeks went on, one after another dropped off, and forgot them, and the family was left to its own resources. Now it was that Tom's wages became their main stay.

"I wish I could bring you in more," he said as he put all into Lizzie's hand when he came in one Saturday evening. "I had an offer of a couple of hours after work; but I did not like to stay, thinking father would be dull, and miss me. I wish there was something that I could put a hand to at home, and make a little money."

"No, Tom, I'm not going to have you killing yourself for us. I can do quite well with what you bring me."

"You can do, mother; but you and he have to go without many a little comfort you've been used to. I've often thought of doing little bits of cabinet-maker's work now and again in an evening."

* * * * *

Christmas was coming near, but the shadow was drawing.

"No, Mrs. Moreton, I won't deceive you," said the kind doctor, at last. "I would be cruel to give you much hope—in fact, to give you any. Your husband cannot live. If he lingers over Christmas I shall be mistaken. You will be comfortable I hope. You have some little money saved, have you not?"

"Very little, sir; but it doesn't matter. I shall not stay long behind him. My heart is broken, sir."

"Never say that—it is very hard, I know, but we'll look after you, and find you something to do. Can you do needle-work?"

"I used, and I do a little now, but my sight is not

good; but it does not matter, sir, I shall soon go; and till I do, there'll be the workhouse for me."

"That is a sad look-out, my poor woman; but I'll keep you in my mind, and something will surely turn up," and the Doctor brushed a tear from his eye, shook hands kindly with her, and took up his hat and was off to go his rounds, and before the day was half over so many scenes of suffering passed before his eyes all day long, that one blotted out the keen impression of another.

"Lizzie," said John that evening as she sat by him, "I am thankful for one thing. I am glad Maggie was taken from us that Christmas Eve. We missed her sadly since, but now that I am going, I am thankful that I am not leaving her behind to struggle with the world. She is safe, and where she is, I am going too, and I shall see her. She will welcome me, my little Maggie will. I see now so plainly that God was merciful in taking her. What he does is always best, and though we may not see it so at the time, we should always try to believe that it is so."

"It was hard at the time, John, and I'm afraid I often spoke very bitterly and wickedly about it, and I was cross to the boy, too. I felt as if he'd come and stepped into her place, and I couldn't endure the very sight of him. I'll never be forgiven all my sins, John."

"There's nothing that God would not forgive for the sake of His blessed Son."

* * * * *

Christmas Eve, and John lay dying! But death had no terror for him, and but one care. The care was the thought of his wife, and what was to support her.

"It isn't fair to the boy to ask him to stay by you, Lizzie. He'll be wanting to go and make his own way in the world, and it's right he should; but you'll be taken care of some way—I know it—though I don't know how."

"Never think of me, John, I'll do well enough. I'll come to you soon."

"I trust in God for you, Lizzie. He'll take care of the widow."

The night went on. How long a night to the two who stood by the bedside! Then came the bright Christmas morning, and the happy bells ringing! ringing! from steeple and tower through the clear air; and a smile passed over the dying man's face as he caught the well-known sound. Then a look of sadness came and rested a moment there.

"What is it, father?" said Tom.

"Of her—I am thinking."

"Of mother?"

"Yes," he said, faintly.

Tom guessed at his thoughts with the quick instinct of love.

"Of how she is to live, is it, father?"

"Yes."

"Then listen, father, and I will tell you," and he took the cold hand in his. "This hand of yours fed and clothed and cherished me, and till mine grows cold in death I will work for and honour and cherish and love her. I am her son in love and duty—I will never let her want; and he kissed the hand which had been to him as that of a father as he spoke."

"Do you hear the boy?" whispered John to Lizzie. Ringing! ringing! The Christmas bells were in on the silence that fell. The brightest and latest smile flashed over the pale face.

"A welcome for me! The joy-bells!" he uttered, and there were no more words, but the smile lingered on the dead lips.

* * * * *

A twelve-month passed, and Christmas dawned again on the widow and her adopted son. The blessing vouchsafed to those who perform their duty, had been granted to Tom Brown, who had gradually obtained so large a private connection, that he was looking forward to the time when he should be able to do without journeyman's work altogether. The returning season had, it is true, brought its reminiscences of sadness, but there was now another person added to the family, in the shape of a fair and neat-handed young girl, whom Tom, a month before, had brought home to his comfortable dwelling as his wife. Elizabeth Brown had been welcomed as a daughter by Lizzie, and tenderly cared for; the widow, wanting no comfort that love can provide, spends this Christmas, not in vain regrets or murmurs at her dispensations, but with a heart glowing with gratitude to her Maker, for the mercies vouchsafed to her, and hoping when her own summons comes, to "Rest in the Lord."

THE TROUBLES OF THIS LIFE, AND HOW TO BEAT THEM. Part II.

MANY of the troubles that people meet with in this world, are nothing else but the natural fruit of wrong doing, and a careless way of living on from day to day without providing against the time of sickness or want. The mischief often begins early in life. When a young girl goes to service, she has many temptations to be dressy and extravagant. Too often she makes acquaintance with the idle and giddy, becomes impatient of restraint; and, perhaps, before she has laid by a single pound, or learnt any of the duties that belong to a poor man's wife, she is ready to accept the first offer of marriage, and set up with a home of her own.

Thus, with possibly hardly money enough to pay for the bare necessities of furniture, a young couple will start in life. The husband likes his pipe, and his pint, or pints of beer, and has no notion of laying these aside. The wife does not want people to think she has gone down in the world, so she must still have her smart gowns and caps.

They both agree that in a little time they will begin to save; but, meanwhile, the habit of selfish indulgence grows stronger and stronger. The wife, finding the time long while her husband is away, and too idle to take in sewing or other work, gets fond of gossiping with her neighbours, and thus neglects her home duties. Her husband, seldom finding his meals ready, or his cottage comfortable, grows more and more fond of the public house, gets into bad company, becomes idle and dissipated, and at last loses his regular work. Then, perhaps, a hard winter sets in, and he is thrown altogether out of employment, while his family and his debts are both increasing. Possibly he takes to poaching, or other dishonest ways, and at last is put into prison, while his small stock of furniture has to be sold, and his wife and family go to the Union. Now, is it not plain that all this misery is just the consequence of wrong doing? For it is as true now as in the days of Solomon that "the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty, and drowsiness clothe a man with rags." How can those who do such things expect others to help them? It is not that God deals hardly with the creatures of His hand, but that people are unkind to themselves. They choose to have present enjoyment rather than future good; and as they sow they must also expect to reap.

But they do not find these troubles any the less hard to bear, because they are what they brought on themselves. To look back on our past lives, and to see, that if it had not been for this foolish, or that wrong act, many a bitter sorrow might be prevented, is very galling to the spirit. And thus, while some vainly seek to drown their griefs in worldly pleasure, others endeavour to stifle the voice of conscience by plunging the more recklessly into vice and folly. Yet this searching into our ways, though painful, is a very needful work to be done, and if we neglect it, there is small hope of our amendment. For it is not by driving away all thought of sorrow, but by looking it calmly in the face, that we can best learn the lessons it is meant to teach us.

It is a wise and merciful provision of God, that injury to the body causes pain; for otherwise our attention would never be drawn to the mischief until too late to remedy it. So it is with our spiritual nature. Suffering necessarily results from sin. Not that God takes pleasure in afflicting His children, but that their troubles may be the means of arousing them to a sense of their danger, and urging them to escape from the snares of the wicked one.

But we must beware of thinking that trial will of itself benefit us. It entirely depends on the use we make of it. If our troubles only lead us to murmur; if, in spite of them, we still go on hardening our hearts against God, despising His chastening, and refusing to listen alike when he speaks to us in wrath as in mercy, then shall we be the worse and not the better for those troubles; then will they be to us but a foretaste of that fearful destruction which will come on the ungodly, when God, who is a consuming fire, "will come to take vengeance on all them that obey not his gospel."

But if, on the other hand, our sorrows lead us to Christ, who is the only sure refuge, and who is able to deliver us from both the power and the punishment of sin; then shall we find that those things which we thought were most against us, were really the greatest blessings of our lives.

When people are so grossly engrossed by worldly cares and anxieties, they are often apt to make the excuse

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